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Summary record of the 9th meeting
Held at Headquarters, New York, on Monday, 27 October 1997, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. Mapuranga ..... (Zimbabwe)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (*continued*)

Hearing of petitioners

Question of New Caledonia (A/C.4/52/6)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairman, Ms. Winslow (Front de libération nationale kanak socialiste) took a place at the petitioners' table.*

2. **Ms. Winslow** (Front de libération nationale kanak socialiste (FLNKS)) said that Mr. Wamytan, President of FLNKS, regretted that he was unable to attend the meeting in person.

3. As the end of the process established under the Matignon accords, due to conclude in 1998, approached, FLNKS felt that significant progress had been made, particularly from 1989 to 1995, in respect of public infrastructure, education, health, economic development, vocational training and managerial training. The results were less satisfactory in respect of the development of Nouméa, the interior and the islands. Despite the optimism constantly professed by the French Government, the Kanak population as a whole had not yet benefited from the Matignon accords, as had been noted by the interministerial mission of the South Pacific Forum in August 1997. France had failed to honour any of its demographic commitments: it had not fulfilled its undertaking to repatriate 24,000 French nationals and was continuing to encourage French immigration to New Caledonia. The 1996 census showed that since 1989, between 15,000 and 20,000 French nationals from the metropolis and overseas Territories had immigrated to New Caledonia, for a total of nearly 8,000 new voters. At the economic level, reforms must continue so as to make the economy more self-sufficient; FLNKS, in demanding that nickel deposits be ceded immediately to allow the establishment of a metallurgical factory in the north, wished to provide the Territory with new economic leverage.

4. FLNKS reaffirmed that the only solution which could provide lasting political stability was the establishment, in 1998, of a State in association with France, a compromise solution which should lead New Caledonia, after a transitional period, to full sovereignty. That arrangement would reconcile the legitimate claims of the Kanak people, an ancient people which had become a minority because of organized immigration but in each election had expressed its determination to accede to sovereignty and independence, with those of the other ethnic communities which had arrived in the Territory through colonization, the vast majority of whom, for various reasons, wished to remain within the French Republic.

5. That approach would have the advantage of establishing an irreversible process of accession to sovereignty after 1998, as opposed to yet another statute which would fail to meet the basic demands of the people and lead to further instability and of settling the colonial question through the transfer to the Territory of certain areas of jurisdiction (natural resources, land ownership, etc.). Any other statute which did not embody the principles of an associated State would be doomed to failure and would undermine political and economic stability.

6. The administering Power, France, must undertake its task of decolonization and assume its responsibility towards history. It must settle the colonial dispute by guiding the new State towards full sovereignty, with respect for the inalienable right of the Kanak people to freedom and independence, in accordance with the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. In the past, each of the statutes promulgated had integrated the Territory and the Kanak people a little more closely into France, to the detriment of true development which would build on local potential and create greater independence at the economic and financial levels.

7. There were already points of agreement between FLNKS and the Rassemblement pour la Caledonie dans la République (RPCR) relating to shared sovereignty and political emancipation. Yet the positions of the various parties were still far apart, and efforts must be made to find a solution which would reconcile apparently contradictory positions.

8. FLNKS hoped that on the basis of the political agreement on associated status, there would be a fixed period during which powers currently held by France would be transferred to the new State along with the necessary resources. At the end of that irreversible process, cooperation would be established between the new State and France. There would need to be guarantees to avoid any takeover by the central State. The population concerned in that process would be the population defined in article 2 of the 1988 referendum law.

9. The transitional statute would be the subject of political agreement between the three parties to the Matignon accords. A draft constitution for an associated State had been submitted to the United Nations in 1987 by FLNKS. FLNKS wished to achieve consensus on that draft with the other two parties to the Matignon accords. It was

well aware of the various constraints, particularly relations between the political forces, the diversity of the population, and the composition of the 1988 electorate, which did not correspond to the concept of population concerned as defined by the United Nations. FLNKS had therefore determined two essential conditions: recognition of the need to restore to the Kanak people its rights in society and in the new nation, including the use of the name Kanaky, a flag, an anthem, recognition of the Kanak culture and solution of land issues; and irreversibility of the progress towards sovereignty and independence from the point of view of the right of self-determination of the indigenous peoples and the sacrifices made by the Kanak people over its colonial history.

10. France could not continue to dominate a small people at the end of the twentieth century and of the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, at a time of so many political and geopolitical changes in the world. Yet the recent history of decolonization demonstrated that the determination of certain Powers to pursue hegemonistic policies and protect their economic or geo-strategic interests under cover of assistance to the most disadvantaged peoples and countries could not be underestimated. That was true of the policy of France in New Caledonia and in the States of the Pacific region, which ignored the existing regional groups and aimed at safeguarding the interests of France as a Pacific power, to the detriment of the interests of the Pacific island States, including New Caledonia. Similarly, the French Government's refusal to restore to the Territory control over its natural resources was motivated by France's concern about energy self-sufficiency and being able to trade New Caledonia's resources.

11. FLNKS reaffirmed the right of the Kanak people to dignity and independence. That right was not negotiable: only the stages by which independence would be attained could be negotiated. Consequently, FLNKS would negotiate with its partners a consensus agreement on the principles of a statute for a State in association with France, a compromise solution which would lead eventually to full sovereignty. France must fulfil its historic responsibility in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1541 (XV), the Charter, and General Assembly resolution 50/33.

12. *Ms. Winslow withdrew.*

Agenda item 18: Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (Territories not covered under other agenda items) (*continued*)

Agenda item 90: Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (*continued*)

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Agenda item 93: Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (*continued*)

Draft resolution in document A/52/23 (Part IV), chapter VIII, paragraph 9, submitted under item 90, on information from Non-Self-Governing Territories

13. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San

Marino, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

France, Israel, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

14. *The draft resolution was adopted by 134 votes to none, with 4 abstentions.*

15. **Ms. Smith** (United Kingdom) said that, as in previous years, her delegation had abstained in the vote on the draft resolution, although her Government would continue to comply with its obligations in respect of its dependent Territories under Article 73 *e* of the Charter. Her delegation could not accept the provision in paragraph 2 that it was for the General Assembly to decide when a Territory had reached a level of self-government sufficient to relieve the administering Power of its obligation to transmit information under Article 73 *e* of the Charter. Such decisions must be left to the Government of the Territory concerned and the administering Power.

16. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America) said that his delegation had abstained in the vote, as it had for the past five years, because under the draft resolution the General Assembly would make the determination as to whether a Territory had achieved self-government under the terms of the Charter. His Government felt that it was ultimately within the authority of the administering Power to determine when its obligations under Article 73 *e* of the Charter had ceased.

Draft proposals in document A/52/23 (Part III), chapter V, paragraph 12 and chapter VI, paragraph 11

17. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America) requested a separate vote on paragraph 7 of the draft resolution entitled "Activities of foreign economic and other interests which impede the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples in Territories under colonial domination" with a view to deletion of that paragraph. His delegation objected to the basic premise of the draft resolution that the mere presence of foreign economic activities in Non-Self-Governing Territories impeded self-determination. Although the draft resolution was a substantial improvement over previous years, his delegation would have to vote against it if paragraph 7 was not deleted or modified. The paragraph served no purpose, as paragraphs 4 and 5 already conveyed the concerns spelled out in it, and it implied that foreign economic activities were implicit in every Non-Self-Governing Territory by virtue of its status. Illegal fishing activities were always harmful, wherever they took place, but paragraph 7 implied that such activities were endemic to Non-Self-Governing Territories. His Government objected to that premise and reiterated its commitment to the preservation of marine life. It had a strong record of establishing conservation areas and marine preserves within its territory and in its administered Territories, as had been acknowledged by Guam.

18. **The Chairman** invited the Committee to vote on the proposal by the United States of America that paragraph 7 of the draft resolution in document A/52/23 (Part III), chapter V, paragraph 12 should be voted on separately. A recorded vote had been requested.

19. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Bulgaria, Israel, Mongolia, United Kingdom, United States.

Against:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Benin, Botswana, Brazil, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Ghana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Kenya, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Australia, France, Russian Federation.

20. *The amendment proposed by the United States of America was rejected by 57 votes to 5, with 3 abstentions.*

Draft resolution contained in document A/52/23, (Part III), chapter V, paragraph 12, submitted under agenda item 91, on foreign economic and other activities

21. **The Chairman** informed the meeting that a recorded vote on the draft resolution had been requested.

22. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Canada, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Israel, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Bulgaria, France, Micronesia (Federated States of), United Kingdom.

23. *The draft resolution contained in document A/52/23 (Part III), chapter V, paragraph 12, was adopted by 140 votes to 2, with 4 abstentions.*

Draft decision contained in document A/52/23 (Part III), chapter VI, paragraph 11, submitted under agenda item 18, on military activities and arrangements

24. **The Chairman** informed the meeting that a recorded vote on the draft resolution had been requested.

25. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Bahrain, Barbados, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta, Mauritania, Mexico, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

Andorra, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States of America.

Abstaining:

Republic of Korea, Ukraine.

26. *The draft resolution contained in document A/52/23 (Part III), chapter VI, paragraph 11, was adopted by 90 votes to 44, with 2 abstentions.*

Draft resolution contained in document A/52/23 (Part IV), chapter VII, paragraph 14, submitted under agenda item 92, on implementation of the Declaration by the specialized agencies

27. **The Chairman** informed the meeting that a recorded vote on the draft resolution had been requested.

28. *A recorded vote was taken.*

In favour:

Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Benin, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Liberia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against:

None.

Abstaining:

Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Micronesia (Federated States of), Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States of America.

29. *The draft resolution contained in document A/52/23 (Part IV), chapter VII, paragraph 14, was adopted by 102 votes to none, with 44 abstentions.*

30. **Ms. Backes** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union, said that the Union was pleased with the progress that had been made on the draft resolution concerning economic activities. In contrast, it had voted against the draft resolution on military activities, as it dealt with a matter that did not appear on the agenda referred by the General Assembly to the Fourth Committee. Regarding the resolution on the specialized agencies, the European Union continued to support those agencies, but because it attached particular importance to respect for their respective mandates, it had abstained.

31. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America) explained that his delegation had abstained in the vote on the latter resolution because it did not deem it appropriate or necessary to link the work of the specialized agencies to the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples. Those agencies' individual mandates provided them with adequate guidance.

Draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.6, submitted under agenda item 93, on study and training facilities

32. **The Chairman** informed the members that Argentina, Jamaica, Sudan, Thailand and Trinidad and Tobago had also become sponsors of the draft resolution.

33. *Draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.6 was adopted unanimously.*

Financial implications of draft resolutions

34. **Mr. Sattar** (Secretary of the Committee) said that there would be no additional financial implications for the programme budget should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.4/52/L.5 on the question of Western Sahara. Similarly, the adoption of the draft resolutions on the other Non-Self-Governing Territories contained in document A/52/23 (Part V), chapter IX, paragraph 31, and (Part VI), chapter X, paragraph 20, would not entail any additional provisions under the programme budget.

Omnibus draft resolution on the questions of American Samoa, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Guam, Montserrat, Pitcairn, St. Helena, Tokelau, the Turks and Caicos Islands and the United States Virgin Islands, submitted under agenda item 18 (A/52/23 (Part VI), chap. X, para. 20)

35. **Ms. Smith** (United Kingdom) said that her delegation proposed the deletion of the word "rising" before "unemployment" in the last preambular paragraph of section B (IX) of the draft resolution, since unemployment on St. Helena, while high at 18 per cent, was in fact steady.

36. **The Chairman** said he took it that the Committee wished to adopt the proposed amendment without a vote.

37. *It was so decided.*

38. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America) said that he wished to propose a correction, rather than an amendment, to the draft resolution. The original consensus resolution had begun with two preambular paragraphs which read: "Noting the report by the administering Power that most of the American Samoan leaders had expressed satisfaction with the island's present relationship with the United States of America" and "Noting also the non-participation of representatives of the peoples of American Samoa in the last two regional seminars". Given the importance of recognizing the point of view of the people of the Territory, their understanding of their current situation and the evolution of their notion of self-determination, he felt it important to maintain the original two preambular paragraphs which took into account the views of the Samoan leaders. If those paragraphs were reinstated, the fourth preambular paragraph of the current resolution could be deleted.

39. **Mr. Samana** (Papua New Guinea), speaking as Chairman of the Special Committee, expressed concern at any attempt to include the purported opinions of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories regarding the status of their relationship with the administering Power. Their views should be ascertained by means of a proper and normal process acceptable to the international community, to ensure an accurate understanding of what those views were. He therefore wished to keep the text as presented.

40. **Mr. Scott** (United States of America) said that in the preceding six months the Committee had negotiated a consensus text which agreed that the United States should be engaged in a dialogue in order to move forward. In its opening declaration, his delegation had expressed its appreciation for that new progress and dialogue. Yet it now found itself faced with changes which had not been brought to its attention by any representative of the Special Committee. His delegation had eagerly anticipated renewed dialogue with the Committee and had sent a letter to the Committee outlining the areas in which progress had been made. That was why he felt it essential for the original consensus text to be reinstated.

41. **Mr. Nuñez-Mosquera** (Cuba) said that the language in the draft resolution as presented accurately reflected the discussions between the administering Power and the Committee, and there should not be any changes at the moment of the vote.

42. **Ms. Smith** (United Kingdom) said that as the other party in the informal dialogue with the Special Committee, her delegation appealed to the Chairman of that Committee to reconsider his position. It was quite in order for the United States to request a return to the previous consensus resolution and neither the United States delegation nor her own had been parties to the discussions of the Special Committee, nor had they been informed of the tenor of those discussions. The Chairman of the Special Committee should return to the consensus text, or the parties involved would no longer be able to work on a consensus basis; that would have serious consequences for the process and for future dialogue.

43. **The Chairman**, supported by **Mr. Akbaruddin** (India) and **Mr. Samana** (Papua New Guinea), suggested that consideration of the draft resolution should be postponed until the Committee's next meeting.

44. *It was so decided.*

Draft resolution in document A/C.4/52/L.3, submitted under agenda item 18, on the question of Gibraltar

45. *The draft resolution was adopted without a vote.*

Draft resolution in document A/C.4/52/L.5, submitted under agenda item 18, on the question of Western Sahara

46. *The draft resolution was adopted without a vote.*

47. **Ms. Backes** (Luxembourg), speaking on behalf of the European Union and of the associate countries Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, as well as of Iceland and Norway, welcomed the consensus adoption of the resolution. The European Union had always supported the holding of a free, regular and impartial referendum on self-determination for the people of Western Sahara. The successful talks led by the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, Mr. James Baker, had created the conditions necessary for implementation of the United Nations settlement plan for Western Sahara.

48. The European Union hoped that the referendum would be held within the next 12 months. The United Nations must complete the identification process as quickly as possible and the European Union called on the parties concerned to cooperate fully with a view to the rapid implementation of the United Nations settlement plan and the agreements signed by them. The United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO) would also continue to play a crucial role in the peace process, to which the European Union would continue to lend its full support.

49. **Mr. Snoussi** (Morocco) said that Morocco had always considered Western Sahara to be an integral part of its territory and had, since independence, been attempting to recover it, including with the assistance of the United Nations. While maintaining his delegation's traditional reservations about the jurisdiction of the United Nations and the framework of the discussions, he supported the draft resolution and would continue to cooperate fully with the United Nations in implementing the settlement plan. Thanks to the remarkable efforts of Mr. James Baker, the thorny question of identification had been resolved and all eligible Saharans would be allowed to vote. He hoped that the identification process would soon recommence and be finished as quickly as possible. He also hoped that those Saharans who had been forced to leave the Territory would be able to return; they would be welcomed by his Government and by the people of Morocco. He expressed confidence that the High Commissioner for Refugees would ensure their safe return to their homeland. He also hoped that the other party would now agree to play a role in their new country, a free and democratic Morocco.

Draft resolution in document A/52/23 (Part V), chapter IX, paragraph 31, submitted under agenda item 18, on the question of New Caledonia

50. **Mr. Terrier** (France) said that he wished to inform the Committee of the situation in New Caledonia since the signing of the Matignon Accords, while at the same time reiterating his delegation's reservations about the competence of the Committee in matters relating to New Caledonia.

51. During the preceding nine years, there had been great changes in the political, economic and social situation in New Caledonia. All the parties concerned had shown goodwill in working towards peace and a better future in the spirit of the 1988 Matignon Accords, in accordance with the terms of which progress had been made towards self-determination, decentralization and redressing economic and social imbalances with a view to preparing for the 1998 referendum. His Government was committed to development, and regular yearly consultations were held by the Committee to Monitor the Matignon Accords to discuss progress made and priorities for the coming year.

52. On an institutional level, the mechanism provided for by the Accords was in place, representatives from all provinces occupied positions of responsibility and all three provinces were exercising their full rights. In the area of the economy, the Government of France was working to stimulate the economy and provide jobs and had signed development contracts with all the provinces. Wide-ranging consultations were continuing and great progress had been made in developing the infrastructure of the island and the nickel mining industry. The development agency established in 1995 had focused on creating a development pole in the northern province and seeking new economic opportunities relating to fisheries, tourism and agro-food industries. Great efforts had been made in the area of education, especially at the secondary and professional levels, where there were growing numbers of graduates. An agency for the development of Kanak culture had also been created to promote local culture.

53. Since the signing of the Matignon Accords, New Caledonia's relationship with its neighbours had been transformed and contacts at all levels had increased. The Territory and the provinces had signed a cooperation agreement with Vanuatu and the Territory was becoming a full partner in the region. The Territory would continue to play an increasingly important role in the South Pacific region, and visits from regional delegations were increasing, which was an encouraging sign of support for the Matignon Accords. The dialogue with the signatories to the Matignon Accords would be broadened to include all political, social and economic actors in the Territory.

54. He expressed satisfaction that the draft resolution took into account positive changes in the Territory and the dialogue occurring therein. Once again, his delegation would not object to the draft and would not request a recorded vote. He stressed however that it was the opinion of his delegation that Article 73 of the Charter did not encompass New Caledonia nor any other of his Government's overseas Territories or departments, and that only the administering Power had the right to decide which Territories could be considered as non-autonomous; no resolution of the General Assembly could modify the Charter in that area or give the Assembly any jurisdiction. His delegation therefore remained of the opinion that the question of New Caledonia was a question of domestic jurisdiction as set out in Article 2, paragraph 7 of the Charter.

55. **Mr. Samana** (Papua New Guinea) said that he welcomed the parts of the statement made by the representative of France dealing with the development of New Caledonia, and was pleased by the fact that a ministerial delegation from the South Pacific Forum countries had been able to visit the Territory, and by its positive report on France's development assistance to it.

56. In opposition to the manner in which resources were being developed, the Kanak people had prevented the operation of the nickel mine. The authorities must take into account the genuine concerns of the people of the Territory regarding control over resources and the way in which they were used.

57. In the preparations for the 1998 referendum, the most important issue was voter eligibility. In that connection, the provisions of the Matignon Accords defining who had the right to vote had to be applied.

58. *The draft resolution was adopted without a vote.*

The meeting was suspended at 5.25 p.m. and resumed at 5.50 p.m.

Draft resolution in document A/C.4/52/L.4/Rev.1, submitted under agenda item 18, on the decolonization programme of the United Nations system

59. **Mr. Samana** (Papua New Guinea), speaking on behalf of the 38 sponsors of the draft resolution, said that it was not his intention to micro-manage the responsibilities of the Secretariat, or to obstruct the laudable reform process. However, the Fifth Committee had adopted biennial and medium-term plans to ensure that due attention was accorded to implementing the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism.

60. He was pleased at the Secretary-General's genuine consideration of the issues raised concerning the Decolonization Programme, and felt that a good compromise had been reached. He had therefore decided to withdraw the draft resolution, and requested that the Secretary-General's letter should be circulated as an official document.

61. **The Chairman** said that he would have the letter circulated.

The meeting rose at 6.05 p.m.